1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

Trade

The bare facts only are known. The Mbuti supply the villagers with meat and with certain forest products, such as roofing leaves or lianas, in return for plantation products. The villager invariably tries to enforce some service as well, with varying degrees of success. Either extreme can be found: cases in which the relationship is formal and binding in fact as well as theory, and those in which the theory is held only by the villagers and does not correspond to the fact, i.e., the Pygmy maintains his side of the trade relationship only so long as it suits him. In my experience the latter is the situation far more often than otherwise.

Then again we must emphasize that trade is not necessary on either side. The villagers could perfectly well hunt if they had to, and the Pygmies could equally well gather all their vegetable needs from the forest. Further, contrary to Schebesta's (1952, 112) assertion, the Mbuti are perfectly capable of cultivating, given a

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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Zaire FO1

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clear space. Some of the net hunters in the Epulu area have tried, and with success, but quickly lose interest and revert to their old nomadic ways.

The fact that there is no attempt to equate the supply of meat and the supply of plantains is also significant. Either side gives what it feels like giving, except that the Mbuti believe themselves free to take what they want if it is not given. There is also the Bira custom mentioned by Joset (1947, 13) of giving the first fruits to the Pygmies. The Mbuti seem to have control of this situation. The villagers have no means of preventing the Mbuti from returning to the depths of the forest whenever they wish. When the Pygmy hunting camp is some distance from the village, the villagers may send in to ask for meat, or the chief may even come himself.

Sometimes the villagers try to gain control of the situation by supplying nets and claiming the appropriate share of a net owner. The Mbuti accept the nets, but see to it that only such game falls into them as they think fit. They eventually contest the ownership of the net, claiming to have added to it themselves and thrown away the damaged, village portion.

At most, it seems possible to regard the trade relationship only as one of mutual convenience. By itself, it is far too unformalized and unstable to provide the basis for the remarkably close relationship that does, in fact, exist between the two groups.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

tional factor that increases the degree of necessity and dependence on the part of the villagers. By "today" I refer to the period of Belgian administration, for which we have historic record. During this period additional demands were made by the administration upon the villagers; notably, able-bodied men were recruited into the road gangs for building and maintaining the thousand-odd miles of road that cross the forest, linking the widely separated administrative posts; and it was also demanded of the villagers that they produce certain specific crops in excess, and cultivate other new crops, particularly cotton, in addition. The food surplus was used to feed immigrant laborers, the cotton to produce some revenue in an otherwise highly unprofitable region.

These demands thus increased the amount of plantation work that had to be undertaken by each village, and at the same time reduced the labor force available. Penalties for failure were severe, and the villagers naturally turned to the Mbuti for help. Equally naturally, the Mbuti declined to help, except when the nature of the work suited their convenience and the rewards were adequate, and a long struggle began that continued right up to the time that independence somewhat altered the situation.

From the villagers' point of view, their relationship with the Mbuti, which had begun to prove rather tiresome and unprofitable, quickly became a matter of acute anxiety. Instead of regarding the Mbuti merely as parasites, which is effectively what they were, the villagers began to regard them as indispensable to the new village economy. From the Mbuti point of view, however, the situation had not changed. The forest was still there as a sanctuary to which they could retire with impunity at, literally, a moment's notice, and the village was still a place where they could relax, enjoy luxury foods, wine and tobacco, in return for a minimum amount of service. Being a practical people, however, they responded, to a token extent, to the new demands for service, in the form of plantation labor. But it was not to their taste, and it proved highly detrimental to their health. The villagers in many cases realized this and compromised by using the Mbuti mainly to maintain guard over the plantations, so they would not be affected by the unaccustomed sunlight or exercise, and only in emergencies asked them to actually work in the fields.

Such emergencies, however, became more and more frequent as administrative demands upon the villagers were increased. The cotton crop became the major issue, and the time of the cotton harvest was

3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Pygmy and said he didn't mind. He suggested 40 francs per week, a wage considerably below what he had been earning as a bugler. He said that if I could afford a present when I left, that would be fine. Pygmies have a way of letting you know when they really mean what they say, and this was one of those times. In all the many months that followed, Kenge never once asked me for money, beyond his meager salary. And once when I was short of cash and we were down in the village he spent his own savings to buy food for the two of us.

In the course of my two previous trips I had come to know most of the Pygmies in this area quite well, and the initiation had cemented our friendship, though at the best I suspect they regarded me merely as a rather harmless outsider. I was soon brought up to date on all that happened during the past three years. Kenge said that the hunting group was still hunting and gathering, but that they sometimes came down to the village and spent time there, earning money at the Station de Chasse or at the motel, money which they promptly spent on food, tobacco, and palm wine at the new stores. They still brought in meat for their *BaKpara*, or "masters," and took plantation foods in return. But, encouraged by the administration, they had begun to make their own plantation in the forest. This was the worst possible news; once the Pygmies have plantations their hunting-and-gathering existence is made impossible. They become tied to one place and do not have time to follow the game.

The two busiest workers on the plantation and those who had the finest clearings were Njobo and Masisi. They were two of the most influential hunters of the group. Njobo had killed two elephants single-handed, and two more in company with other Pygmies. He had three wives, but had only one child, a son by his second wife. The son, Nyange, had been a healthy lad when I had last seen him, but now he was crippled with tuberculosis of the leg bone.

Masisi was a relative of Njobo's, and though not such a renowned

3t Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
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THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here and there where the *fito*—the sapling used by villagers for building their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams, and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market. Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies* three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before,

* Folkways Records FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4458, Music of the Ituri Forest

3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

000 Chase as they were put through their exercises, all obscured the faint chirpings of crickets and birds and the chatter of monkeys. 361 And as the sun rose and began to beat down on the parched and 247 scorched earth, the village asserted once more its determination to 512 dominate the hostile world around it. The men went off to cut down 313 more trees for more houses and bigger plantations, and the women went to hoe and cultivate the small fields so laboriously prepared, which after another one or two years of hard work would have to be abandoned. For the soil which can support the primeval forest with luxurious ease refuses to bear fruit to the crops of the villagers for more than three consecutive years.

361 In the neighborhood of the Epulu there were, in fact, several vil- 717 lages. Some twenty-five years earlier, when Patrick Putnam first 621 came to the spot and decided to settle there, there were none. He built his home with the help of various men of different tribes whom he took around with him to assist him in his work. Some were from villages several hundred miles away. They called in other helpers, and gradually the village of Camp Putnam came into being. A pretty, straggling village, neat huts dotted haphazardly either side of a gracefully curving track, just wide enough for a car to pass through to Pat's home. Even though its members came from half a dozen different tribes, it quickly assumed the characteristics of a traditional, tribal, forest village. The family feeling that is so powerful where a village consists of all the men of a single clan, their wives and children, was replaced by a common loyalty to Pat, who worked day and night in his small dispensary, saving the lives of the people he loved and, in the end, giving his own. Pat acted as chief in nearly all respects. Disputes were brought to him and he settled them, wisely and justly, according to the tribal laws he knew so well. The village began to attract Pygmies, who gradually attached themselves, again in a perfectly traditional manner.

To a lesser extent this was so even with the new and distinctly

3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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either a pith helmet decorated with gennet skin, or else a long-haired wig of monkey fur. In his hand he carried a metal walking stick that had once been the handle and stem of an umbrella. Sometimes he wore the gennet skin around his waist, or tucked into his belt, or hung from his neck. It was the symbol of his ritual authority, and it contained the charms from which he derived his power. Generally Sabani was a kindly and gentle man, wise and good. But his loyalties were narrow, confined to his own kin and a few friends. Beyond that circle he was a man to be feared rather than trusted.

Eboyo also had its Pygmy village, not far from the main village, but Sabani preferred to keep his Pygmies in the forest where the administration could not see what they were doing. Generally they were tending illicit plantations, of hemp among other things. Sabani also had his own still, where he used to have a powerful spirit made from manioc. He was frequently drunk but never incapable. At all times he was an imposing and commanding figure. In his village there were some thirty families, including Kapamba's. Camp Putnam and Dar es Salaam were about half that size.

The attitude of all these villagers to the forest was the same. They made their villages as open as possible, and they built their houses without any windows. They tried to ignore the world around them, because for them the forest was hostile, something to be feared and fought. Even after cutting it down there was the constant labor required to keep it from growing back. It was filled with evil spirits that cursed the soil so that although it would bear gigantic mahogany trees it would produce only the most meager fruits for the villagers.

The tribes of this area had once been plains dwellers, with herds of cattle, living in the friendly open spaces of East Africa. When they were driven into the forest by more powerful tribes, they brought as much of their plains culture with them as they could. But their cattle died off, and they had to live by cultivation alone. They